

Devotion to the Mother of God

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DEVOTION TO THE MOTHER OF GOD

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Devotion to the Mother of God

DEVOTION to the Mother of our Lord is one of the distinguishing marks of Catholicism wherever it is found. That it sometimes has been too exuberant in its expression cannot be denied. Devotion is a thing of fervor, it leans to the poetic, and exaggeration is an ever-present tendency in its expression. These facts, however, do not justify a refusal to give devotion where it is due. The question is not, "Has devotion to Mary ever led to extravagance?" but rather, "Do Christians actually owe devotion to Mary?"

Before we begin to answer this question, we must stop a moment at the matter of prejudice. For some five hundred years there has been, in protestant Christianity, a dogged denial of Mary's right to devotion, which has been handed down from generation to generation. Thousands today have simply attached a mental tag "forbidden" to the whole idea without giving the matter any kind of thought. Argument against prejudice is always useless because prejudice is not an attitude based upon reason and no attempt will be made here to engage in so fruitless a task. If, however, this examination

of a questioned element of Christianity leads anyone determinedly to set aside prejudice and apply intelligence to the matter, it has served its purpose.

The Basis

Devotion to Mary is rooted firmly in the doctrine of the Communion of Saints and it is significant that, when one traces out the thinking which lies behind denials of Marian devotion, he usually finds a defective apprehension of this article of the creed.

The doctrine of the Communion of Saints begins with the important truth that physical death does not mean the end of a human being. Death is a very drastic experience, but it is still only an experience in the life of a creature who, at his conception, was destined to live forever. The real man emerges on the other side of this experience, essentially the same person he was in this world.

What Christianity asserts in the doctrine of the Communion of Saints is that there is a real and actual intercommunion of interest and life between Christians on this side of death and Christians on the other side, centered in the Risen, Ascended Christ. The faithful, in whatever state of existence they may happen to be, are one body with Christ as Head. All that is of interest to one part of the Body of Christ is of interest to the rest and all work together in a common life. To deny this is to do

violence to much of the teaching of the New Testament.

There is, however, in current Christianity a very definite tendency to forget these truths and to limit the Communion of Saints to intercourse between Christians who are still on this side of death. This tendency leads men to think of the saints only in terms of the past—what they were on earth and what they did in this world. From any practical point of view, the saints ceased to exist when they died and their only operation on our lives today is the example they gave us before death of good and holy living.

On the other hand, the Christian who fully apprehends the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, thinks of the saints primarily in terms of the present—what they are in heaven and what they are doing now. The importance of the earthly life of the saint is not to be minimized, for two reasons. In the first place, it gives us the only key we can have to his character, his special interests, and his particular manifestation of Christ. But we do not stop there. Having learned these things, we turn our thoughts to heaven where he lives today, the same character gloriously perfected, with the same interests mightily intensified, and the same particular manifestation of Christ wonderfully completed. And we give him honor for what he is.

In the second place, we find in the earthly life of the saints examples of success in victorious living and learn how they conquered the same difficulties and temptations we face today. As we imitate their methods, we too shall conquer. But again we realize that the saint is today living in a state where all his endeavours have come to a glorious fruition. And, if he is the same character, with the same interests he had on earth, we are sure that he is interested in our efforts to conquer the difficulties and temptations which he conquered. So we count on his interested prayers for us before the Throne and we do not hesitate to ask for those prayers. What the saint is doing today in the life of the Body is of primary importance.

The Need

The claim is made that present-day limitation of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints to relations between Christians on this side of death, was due originally to a praiseworthy motive. It was felt, we are told, that the worldly needs of men and their rights as human beings were being ignored, while their attention was being diverted from the injustices of ruling classes by a rosy picture of heaven. One questions whether this contention is borne out by the facts of history. It was in the Middle Ages that the foundation of our modern institutions of edu-

cation and care of the sick and underprivileged were laid and the work was done by men and women who lived in daily intimacy with the citizens of heaven. But however good the motives, few today would care to claim, in the light of the problems of human relations facing the world, that concentration exclusively on the present world has been successful. It has cost men any sort of intercourse with the life of heaven while, at the same time, they have not attained to the worldly paradise which was allegedly sought by placing all emphasis upon affairs of this world.

In man's religious life, this over-emphasis upon worldly relations has had far wider effects than loss of conscious communion with the saints. The Living, Ascended Christ, who reigns in heaven now and operates in the present, is so forgotten that our Lord has become for thousands merely a long-dead Teacher who once gave men some principles by which to live. Contact with him can be nothing more than remembering what he said and did centuries ago. The mighty Sacrifice of the Altar, whereby men on this side of death stand in the very court of heaven "with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven" has become a ceremony whose only force is to remind men of events of ancient history. The sacraments, whereby the living Christ reaches forth a glorified hand to bestow new power to our weakness, have fallen to the status of mere worldly

actions which serve only to stir men up to the exertion of extra effort.

All of these things go hand in hand with a lack of apprehension of the life and work of the saints in heaven and a loss of participation in the fulness of the Communion of Saints. It is hardly possible for us to realize the glory of Christ without considering the saints, and Christians need to look up and see the living saints before the throne of God, to realize the oneness of all the faithful in the Living Christ.

Until these things are clear, it is impossible to understand Catholic devotion to Mary. It is not primarily the devotion of a patriot to some character, long dead, who once did important things for his country. Mary lives today a fuller, more complete human life than she ever lived in this world, and her interest in her Son's work is infinitely more intense than it was in the days prior to her death. Unless this is clear, the kind of devotion which the Catholic gives to Mary is, at best, meaningless.

Mary's Creaturehood

Mary is a human being and, as such, is a creature of God. There has never been the slightest confusion in Catholic theology between humanity and divinity in regard to her. She is in no way a goddess to Catholics. No one has ever supposed that she always existed, as have the three Persons of the Trinity.

Mary is a creature, called into existence out of nothingness by God at a certain point of time through the instrumentality of her father and mother (traditionally Sts. Joachim and Anne). An infinite distance separates her from the Infinite. Like all creatures, all she possesses she has received. She has no grace, no virtue, no privileges which she does not owe to her divine Redeemer. In both natural and supernatural being, she is wholly the gift of God. Every time the Catholic says the "Hail Mary" he asserts the fact of Mary's creaturehood in the phrase, "Full of grace."

But in the mystery of God's operation, he does not do his work alone. In his plan for the world, he created man in his own image and likeness by giving to him that which he had not given to any of the lower creatures—reason and will. To these natural capacities, God added gifts of his own divine life and thus elevated man to a state of participation in the divine nature. This image and likeness, heightened and completed by participation in the divine life, was bestowed upon man in order that he might be God's agent in running the visible universe. God's plan was not to conduct the affairs of the world directly. He "took man and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it and keep it."

When, by sinning, man lost the added gifts of God's life and fell into a state of mere, unassisted

nature, he could still rule the affairs of the world because he still had reason and will. But he could no longer rule them for God. So the Father sent the Son into human nature to bring back these added gifts which man had lost, in order that man could again act for God in the affairs of the world. This is the profoundest meaning of redemption. It raises man from his natural impotence to act for God, into a participation in the divine life so that, while still remaining a creature, man is enabled to cooperate in the work of establishing the Kingdom of God upon earth. This is of the essence of Christianity. God brings the divine life to us in order that we may be cooperators in his redemptive operation. Human life finds its significance in the plan of God whereby God does not do his work alone, but through those whom he chooses and empowers.

But man's will is entirely free in this matter. Supernatural grace does not offer violence to man's natural dignity. God calls all to a cooperation in his work. All do not respond. He offers the divine life to all that they may do this mighty work. All do not accept it. It is only through those who willingly accept their vocations and receive God's life that God does his redemptive work.

And there is no evidence in Holy Scripture that death ends this work of cooperation. The notion of heaven as an endless holiday after a hard day's

work in the world is not part of the Christian gospel. The Christian character is fundamentally one which is built up upon cooperation with God's work. It therefore follows that the perfection of that character in heaven must mean an intensifying of that cooperation. If this is not true, then death is actually the end of a man and what persists is not the same character who lived in this world. The few glimpses which Holy Scripture gives us into the life of heaven bear out this contention. The saint on the other side of death is the same character he was on earth and is still finding the meaning of life in cooperation with God's redemptive work.

Her Continuous Cooperation

If we view Mary from this standpoint, we shall see that she now continues in heaven that full cooperation with God in his redemptive work which she began while on earth. The place assigned to her in this operation of God was entirely unique. She was given the unparalleled vocation of giving of her substance for the formation of the human nature of God the Son and was placed in a relationship to the Redeemer held by no other, the relationship of mother. Yet, because she was a human being, she had the power of refusing this unique call. So her blessedness is not only in the sphere of call or vocation, but also in the realm of response, the realm of

morality and religion. As far as in her lay, she gave herself, all that she was, to the service of God in his redemptive work. She surrendered her infinitely small humanity without limitation or stint to the visitation of grace and so was the sublimest instrument of redemption.

Because of the uniqueness of her part in God's redemptive work (both by God's appointment and her response) she had a special favored relationship to our Lord. Much is often made by those who would deny Mary's right to devotion, of what seems to be a strange attitude of our Lord toward her in the Gospel. It is assumed that he was always disassociating himself from her. It is singular that men who would claim our Lord as the perfect example of living, should jump to the conclusion that he resented his mother and constantly said cutting things to hurt her. The explanation of this apparent strangeness is to be sought rather in the special intimacy which existed between Mary and her Divine Son. She understood him so well that he did not need to measure words when he spoke to her. If it was an occasion which presented an opportunity to teach some truth, he could go freely ahead knowing that she would not misunderstand. If, when she interceded with him because the wine was exhausted in Cana, he replied, "Lady, what have I to do with thee, mine hour is not yet come," Mary was calmly

confident that he would grant her request and said to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." If, when the excited woman in the crowd cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee and the paps which thou hast sucked," he replied, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it," he knew Mary would understand that he was simply pointing out the other aspect of her greatness. It is lack of apprehension of the intimacy which existed between Jesus and Mary that makes these Gospel incidents difficult.

So Mary gave human nature to God the Son, fed him at her breast, lived with him in the intimacy of the perfect home in Nazareth for thirty years, was close to him in his ministry, shared in his suffering on Calvary, and was in the upper room on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost created Christ's mystical body out of his followers. She was one with him in his redemptive purpose and always gave herself entirely to cooperation with his redemptive work. That was the pre-eminent character of Mary on earth. At her death she entered heaven, still his mother, and the mother of all those who are his brethren. She is not today a different character than she was on earth and her cooperation with his redemptive operation is still unique among that of all the saints.

Thus, Catholic theology gives to Mary a special

place of honor among the saints, the place assigned to her by God and willingly accepted by her sacrificed will. We are bidden to give honor to all the saints and may confidently count on their help in our redemption. But we are told to give her special honor and are assured that her prayers for us are more powerful than any others.

This attitude of regarding the Mother of Jesus as our mother, who has a mother's interest in us and aids us by her prayers, bestows upon the Catholic a special family intimacy with Jesus which nothing else can quite approximate. It cannot be described. Only those who actually live daily with Mary can know exactly what it means.

Origins of Marian Devotion

Objections to devotion to Mary are sometimes based upon the fact that it was a development in the Christian religion. There are two groups of people who make this objection. One will accept no development in Christianity after the books of the New Testament were written and anything that is not explicit in the New Testament is considered an unwarranted addition to the Christian faith. The other group allows for somewhat more development through a period called the "primitive church," but no more. Few seem to agree upon the date when the Church ceased to be "primitive" and its extent seems

usually to be shortened or lengthened by those who wish to include or exclude some particular theory, practise or doctrine.

Catholicism puts no limits of *time* upon the development of doctrine. It has taken literally the promise of our Lord that the Holy Spirit would guide his Church into all truth. Many of the doctrines of Christianity are so vast and deep that centuries of consecrated thought and study have been needed to understand them. Indeed, after almost two thousand years, the Church has not yet been able to think through all the implications of the Atonement or the Eucharistic Sacrifice and has no official theories about them today.

However, Catholicism does put a limit of *content* upon the development of doctrine. It decrees that nothing can be required as necessary to salvation which is not contained implicitly or explicitly in Holy Scripture. This means that any development must have its source in Holy Scripture and that any proposed doctrine must stand the test of Scripture if it is to be legitimately taught as a necessary part of the Christian faith. Anglicanism has always held steadfastly to this principle and every priest at his ordination must answer in the affirmative the question, "Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all Doctrine required as necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?"

It hardly seems necessary here to show that the doctrines which we have been considering stand this test of Holy Scripture. It cannot be denied that Holy Scripture gives Mary a place which is completely unique among the followers of our Lord who cooperated in his redemptive work; and certainly the doctrine of the Communion of Saints as outlined above, is firmly grounded in the New Testament. These things are the basis of Marian devotion and the theology concerning it developed out of them at an early date.

Contrary to the common idea that this element of Christianity was the invention of medieval popes, it actually arose in the East and was highly developed there centuries before it spread to the Western Church. As early as 320 A. D. there was an annual feast of the Blessed Virgin, and, at the beginning of the fifth century, St. Cyril could write, "Hail to thee Mary, Mother of God, to whom in town and village, and in island, are found Churches of true believers." Before the beginning of the sixth century, devotion to Mary had assumed in the East all the features which we usually associate with the late Middle Ages.

Devotion to Mary was especially strengthened by the necessity of combatting heresy during the first five centuries of the Church's life. Most of the early heresies had to do with Christology, who and what

our Lord was, and the status of the blessed Mother was necessarily involved in the development of the Church's theology in regard to our Lord. As men began to realize the pre-eminent greatness of Christ, they came to see how unique among the saints Mary was. In particular, the Nestorian conflict gave great impetus to the veneration of Mary. The heresy of Nestorius was the notion that Mary bore a mere man who later became united with God the Son. In proclaiming the truth that the Person of Jesus was always God the Son from the moment of his conception, the Council of Ephesus in 431 declared that he whom Mary conceived was God. To give point to this declaration, the Council took over a word already used a century before by Athanasius in refuting Arius and called Mary "Theotokos"—Mother of God.

In the whole Eastern Church today, veneration of Mary, both public and private, is a normal part of the Christian life. Bulgakov in his work, "The Orthodox Church," sums it up in this way:

Living in heaven in a state of glory the Virgin remains the mother of the human race for which she prays and intercedes. This is why the Church addresses to her its supplications, invoking her aid. She covers the world with her veil, praying, weeping for the sins of the world; at the Last Judgment she will intercede before her Son and ask pardon from Him. She sanctifies the whole natural world;

in her and by her the world attains transfiguration. In a word, the veneration of the Virgin marks with its imprint all Christian anthropology and cosmology, and all the life of prayer and piety.

Development of the Devotion

It was not, however, until the eighth century that Marian devotion began to find an authoritative acceptance in Western Christianity. Whatever personal devotion there may have been to Mary among individuals before this, the Church had not yet moved to give the devotion authority. However, in this century the great Western feasts of Mary received authorization and, from then on, personal devotion to her began to develop officially. By the year 1000 A. D. men's deep feeling of love and confidence in our Lord's mother began to take shape in a multitude of devotional practices. Shrines and altars were erected to her, Saturday came to be especially dedicated to her, the "Hail Mary" found its place in the official prayers of the Church. The age-long development of devotion to the Blessed Mother was complete.

It is not uncommon to hear it said that the Anglican Church officially repudiated this devotion at the Reformation. Actually nothing of the sort happened. It is true that, due to many inroads of protestantism upon the life of the Church of England, personal devotion to Mary became lost until it was

rediscovered in the Catholic revival of the past century. But during the English Reformation, nothing was said by the Church in its official documents which would prohibit the faithful from giving to Mary that unique honor which Christianity was accustomed to give her. The Creed still contained the article, "I believe in the Communion of Saints," and, while most of the continental protestant reformers had definitely eliminated all thought of the departed saints as being involved in this article, Anglicanism seems carefully to have avoided giving any official voice to such a novel idea. The only official statement touching this subject is in the Thirty-Nine Articles. Article XXII declares that "The Romish doctrine concerning the Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God." What is usually neglected in considering this article is the word "Romish" which is a technical term used throughout the Articles to refer to various abuses and excesses which had crept into the life of the Church. Thus the article does not condemn the *Catholic* doctrine of the invocation of saints, but rather practises concerning it which were abuses of that doctrine. This was very important in England where excesses in regard to the cult of the saints seem to have been worse than in any other part of the Church. The "Hail Mary," together with

any mention of the invocation of the saints, was omitted from the English Prayer Books, but there was nothing to deny their use to the faithful in Anglicanism. Today most of the greater, traditional feasts of Mary still appear on the calendar of the English Prayer Book.

Considerable fruitless excitement is sometimes aroused over the fact that the Roman Catholic Church has made two traditional doctrines concerning our Lady *de fide*, i.e. essential parts of the Christian faith which must be accepted and believed. These are (1) the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, promulgated in 1854, which teaches that Mary was preserved free from all stain of original sin in the first instant of her conception; and (2) the doctrine of the Bodily Assumption, promulgated in 1953, which asserts that Mary received her resurrection body immediately after death and entered heaven in body as well as in soul. Before these two dates, both of the doctrines had been widely held for many centuries and the latter had been a matter of continuing tradition since the 500s.

Few Anglicans who love our Lady have difficulty about these doctrines, for both are reasonable, probable and do no violence to any other doctrine of the Christian faith. At the same time, neither of them can be proved, by anything in Holy Scripture, to have been part of Apostolic teaching. The develop-

ment of veneration of Mary is, as we have seen, grounded solidly in the Bible. These doctrines are not so grounded and, to the Anglican, there is thus a violation of a fundamental Catholic principle in making either of them articles of the faith which must be accepted. At any rate, members of the Anglican Communion are not bound by papal decrees, all are morally free to accept or reject these doctrines, and neither of them is taught as a necessary part of the Christian faith among us.

NOTE: The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception should not be confused with the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. They are two entirely different things. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth, taught by Holy Scripture and contained in the creeds, is that our Lord was conceived of Mary without a human father by the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, promulgated by the Roman Catholic Vatican Council in 1854, has nothing to do with virgin birth. It simply asserts that, at her conception, Mary was exempted by God from the universal taint of human nature—original sin.

Forms

It remains to consider briefly some of the definite forms of devotion to Mary which have grown up among Western Catholics.

I. THE FEASTS OF MARY

In the traditional Western calendar, veneration of Mary is carried on liturgically during the year by a cycle of feasts. Just as the feasts of our Lord are based upon his earthly life, so this Marian cycle is

based upon the life of Mary. As we go on in the Church's year, we trace the important events in that unique life. Because a whole lifetime must be compressed into a twelve-month period, the feasts of Mary, like those of our Lord, do not always fall in logical sequence.

February 2nd: THE PURIFICATION. This is the oldest feast of Mary. It falls forty days after Christmas and celebrates the events recorded in St. Luke ii:22 to 40, when Mary appeared in the Temple to undergo her purificatory rites and to present her Infant to God. For many centuries, this feast has been associated with candles used in the Church's worship (probably because the aged Simeon on this occasion addressed our Lord as "a Light") and is called "Candlemas." One of the liturgical processions of the year comes on this day.

March 25th: THE ANNUNCIATION. This feast falls exactly nine months before Christmas and is the real feast of the Incarnation. The story is recorded in St. Luke 1:26 to 38. When Mary had consented to be used by God at the message of the angel, the humanity of the Son began to form in her body by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Thus the feast was sometimes called "The Conception of Christ" in earlier days.

July 2nd: THE VISITATION. Between the Annunciation and our Lord's birth, Mary paid a visit to

her cousin St. Elisabeth, who was soon to bear John the Baptist. It was on this occasion that Mary sang "Magnificat." The story is told in St. Luke 1:39 to 56.

August 15th: THE ASSUMPTION. This is one of the older feasts of Mary and commemorates the day of her death. Because she was always sinless and at death needed no sort of purgation, this is also the day of her entry into heaven.

September 8th: THE NATIVITY OF MARY. This is our Lady's traditional birthday. It falls exactly nine months after the feast of her Conception.

December 8th: THE CONCEPTION OF MARY. This feast is centuries older than the promulgation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and is kept in celebration of the first moment of existence of her who was to become the Mother of Jesus. It stands on the calendar of the English Church today and, as noted above, falls nine months before Mary's birthday. Mary is the only saint whose conception is celebrated in the calendar.

On the Friday after Passion Sunday. THE SEVEN SORROWS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. This feast celebrates Mary's part in the Passion of our Lord and is always an important feature of Passiontide.

2. THE HAIL MARY

HAIL, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the

fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

The "Hail Mary" is the most popular and familiar of all prayers used by Western Christians in honor of our Lady. It has come to its present form by an age-long development and is drawn from three sources: 1. the words used by the Archangel Gabriel in saluting Mary at the Annunciation (St. Luke 1:28); 2. the salutation of St. Elisabeth at the Visitation (St. Luke 1:42); and, 3. a prayer of invocation added by the Church. The word "Jesus" after "the fruit of thy womb" is not in the Gospel salutation but was added to the phrase in very early times.

The "Hail Mary" was in common use as early as the year 1050 but only as a salutation without the part beginning "Holy Mary, Mother of God." By the fourteenth century, however, it had become customary for Christians, in their private devotions, to add petitions to the salutation, asking Mary's prayers for various personal objects. By the middle of the sixteenth century, this petition had become conventionalized and the "Hail Mary" has contained the petition in its present form ever since.

3. THE ANGELUS

The Angel of the Lord announced unto Mary, and she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

Hail, Mary &c

Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

Hail, Mary &c

And the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us.

Hail, Mary &c

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

WE beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts: that, as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

This is the devotion in honor of the Incarnation said by Christians when the church bells ring in the morning, at noon, and at night. In its present form it reviews the three final stages in the coming of God the Son into human nature: 1. the announcement of God's purpose to Mary; 2. Mary's response of willingness to be used by God in his redemptive work; and, 3. the consequent action of the Holy Ghost in making God the Son incarnate in Mary's body.

Like most popular devotions, the Angelus grew up in the daily lives of the pious and the definite steps in its history cannot be traced. It seems to have originated in a thirteenth century custom of saying three "Hail Marys" when the evening bell was rung

(either curfew or the bell calling monastic communities to Compline). This custom was later extended to the time of early morning bells and, finally, the prayers at noon were added. The antiphons, versicle and prayer were not added to the old "three Hail Marys" until the sixteenth century. In Eastertide the "Regina Coeli" (see below) is substituted for the usual prayers of the Angelus.

4. THE ANTIPHONS OF OUR LADY

These four little anthems to Mary are not as well known as many other devotions. Their authorship is obscure, although there are many legends surrounding the origins of each of them. They are separate compositions, very different in content and literary style, and date back to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Since the thirteenth century they have been assigned to be said at the end of Lauds and Compline in Western office books. It is interesting to note that the rubric which appears in our Prayer Book at the end of the third collect of Evening Prayer ("In places where it may be convenient, here followeth the Anthem.") is a continuation of the pre-reformation practise in England of saying these anthems of our Lady at the end of Compline.

To understand these antiphons, one must remember what we said in the beginning of these consid-

erations; *viz.* the language of devotion cannot be too rigidly restrained. Devotion pours itself out freely in hailing its object. The words of these little songs would be strange on the lips of individuals who did not have a warm, heart-felt devotion to our Blessed Mother. But they are entirely natural to him who knows and loves her. The versicles and collects seem to have been added to the antiphons when they were appointed to be used in the daily office. Most of them were borrowed from other sources.

There have been many English translations of these antiphons. The translation given here is that of the late Canon Winfred Douglas in "The Monastic Diurnal." Desiring to put them into English which could be sung to the traditional melodies, Canon Douglas performed the seemingly impossible task of so translating them that almost every accent in the Latin is reproduced in the English and the rhythm of the Latin poetry is completely preserved.

ALMA REDEMPTORIS

(From the beginning of Advent to the Feast of the Purification, February 2nd)

GRACIOUS Mother of our Redeemer, for ever abiding Heaven's gateway, and star of ocean, O succour the people, Who, though falling, strive to rise again.

Thou Maiden who barest thy holy Creator, to the wonder
of all nature;
Ever Virgin, after, as before thou receivedst that Ave
From the mouth of Gabriel; have compassion on us sinners.

(In Advent)

V. The Angel of the Lord announced unto Mary.
R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

WE beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts:
that, as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus
Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion
we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection;
through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

(After Christmas)

V. After Childbearing, O Virgin, thou didst remain
inviolatē.
R. Intercede for us, O Mother of God.

O GOD, who by the fruitful virginity of blessed Mary hast
bestowed upon mankind the reward of eternal salvation:
grant, we beseech thee, that we may know the help of her
intercession, through whom we have been accounted worthy
to receive the Author of our Life, Jesus Christ thy Son our
Lord. Amen.

AVE, REGINA COELORUM

(From February 2nd to Maundy Thursday)

QUEEN of the heavens, we hail thee,
Hail thee, Lady of all the Angels;
Thou the dawn, the door of morning
Whence the world's true light is risen:

Joy to thee, O Virgin glorious,
Beautiful beyond all other;
Hail, and farewell, O most gracious,
Intercede for us alway to Jesus.

V. Vouchsafe that I may praise thee, O holy Virgin.
R. Give me strength against thine enemies.

GRANT us, O merciful God, protection in our weakness:
that we who celebrate the memory of the holy Mother of
God may, through the aid of her intercession, rise again
from our sins. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

REGINA COELI

(During Eastertide)

O QUEEN of heaven, be joyful, alleluia;
Because he whom so meetly thou barest, alleluia,
Hath arisen, as he promised, alleluia:
Pray for us to the Father, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
R. For the Lord is risen indeed, alleluia.

O GOD, who, by the resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ,
didst vouchsafe to give gladness unto the world: grant, we
beseech thee, that we, being holpen by the Virgin Mary,
his Mother, may attain unto the joys of everlasting life.
Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

SALVE REGINA

(During the Trinity season)

MARY, we hail thee, Mother and Queen compassionate;
Mary, our comfort, life, and hope, we hail thee. To thee we
exiles, children of Eve, lift our crying. To thee we are

sighing, as mournful and weeping, we pass through this vale of sorrow. Turn thou, therefore, O our intercessor, those thine eyes of pity and loving-kindness upon us sinners. Hereafter, when our earthly exile shall be ended, shew us Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb. O gentle, O tender, O gracious Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of the glorious Virgin Mother Mary to become a habitation meet for thy Son: grant that as we rejoice in her commemoration, we may be delivered by her loving intercession from our present evils and from eternal death. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.